Amendments to the Claims

Please replace the previously pending claims with the claims in the following claim listing:

1.   (Currently amended) A method of diagnosing lupus nephritis in a mammal of interest selected from the group consisting of a human and a mouse, the method comprising the steps of:

(a)   detecting an expression level of midkine gene in a ~~biological~~ kidney sample isolated from the mammal of interest, wherein the mammal of interest is selected from the group consisting of a human and a mouse; ~~wherein the biological sample is selected from the group consisting of a kidney sample, a urine sample, and a blood sample;~~ and

(b)   ~~using the expression level as a marker for lupus nephritis in the mammal of interest~~ comparing the expression level in the mammal of interest with a reference, wherein an elevated expression level in the mammal of interest as compared to the reference indicates that the mammal of interest has an increased likelihood of lupus nephritis.

2.   (Currently amended) The method of claim 22, wherein said at least one control sample is a kidney sample isolated from at least one control mammal, wherein said at least one control mammal is of the same species as the mammal of interest, and wherein said at least one control mammal does not have systemic lupus erythematosus or lupus nephritis.

3.   (Canceled)

4.   (Withdrawn) The method of claim 2, wherein the expression level and the reference expression level are detected using an antibody directed against a product of said midkine gene.

5.   (Original) The method of claim 2, wherein the expression level and the reference expression level are detected by measuring the level of an RNA transcript of said midkine gene.

6-7.   (Canceled)

8.   (Original) The method of claim 2, wherein the mammal of interest is a human.

9-21.   (Canceled)

22.   (Currently amended) The method of claim 1, wherein ~~step (b) comprises comparing the expression level to a reference~~ <u>the reference comprises an expression</u> level of said midkine gene in at least one control sample.